REMARKS

The present application was filed on January 29, 2002 with claims 1 through 25. Claims 1 through 24 are presently pending in the above-identified patent application. Claims 1, 13 and 22-25 are proposed to be amended.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6, 9-15 and 19-25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hadfield et al., "Windows NT Server 4 Security Handbook," (1997) (hereinafter, referred to as "Hadfield"). The Examiner indicated that claims 4, 5, 7, 8, and 16-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

<u>Independent Claims 1, 13 and 22-25</u>

Independent claims 1, 13 and 22-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hadfield. With regard to claims 1, 13 and 22-25, the Examiner asserts that Hadfield discloses computationally verifying an identity of said user; and computationally verifying a membership of said user with said one or more groups, wherein said verifying computations are performed substantially simultaneously using user information stored in a computer file associated with said user.

Each of the independent claims 1, 13 and 22-25 have been amended to emphasize that the "verifying computations are performed substantially simultaneously using a *single cryptographic operation* and user information stored in a computer file that is local to said user." The Examiner has previously considered the "single operation" limitation, for example, with respect to claims 9 and 13. Applicants have now amended the claims to further point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicant regards as the invention (verifying an identity of a user *and* verifying a membership of the user with said one or more groups using a single cryptographic operation).

When rejecting claim 9, for example, the Examiner asserted that Hadfield disclosed verifying computations performed in a single application. The Examiner noted that the RSA encryption algorithm is employed for authentication, which is functionally equivalent to the recited El Gomal algorithm and it is a matter of "implementation." To the contrary, however, neither Hadfield or the RSA encryption algorithm teaches verifying an identity of a user *and* verifying a membership of the user with said one or

more groups using a single cryptographic operation, as required by each independent claim, as amended.

The Windows NT operation described by Hadfield uses a database access that requires more than one operation. Hadfield uses centralized information stored in an "account database." When the user is attempting to log on to a Windows NT Server, as relevant here, "the account name and password are compared with the domain's account database. If the server is a member of a trusting domain, the user also is given the option of authenticating against the trusted domain's account database." Hadfield at page 168, at lines 12-15.

The Examiner has not identified any specific portion of Hadfield or the RSA algorithm that performs two verification operations using a single cryptographic operation.

Thus, Hadfield does not disclose or suggest verifying an identity of a user *and* verifying a membership of the user with said one or more groups using a single cryptographic operation, as required by each independent claim, as amended.

Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1, 13 and 22-25.

Dependent Claims 2-12 and 14-21

Claims 2-12 and 14-21 are dependent on independent claims 1 and 13, and are therefore patentably distinguished over Hadfield because of their dependency from independent claims 1 and 13 for the reasons set forth above, as well as other elements these claims add in combination to their base claim.
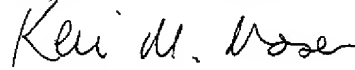
The Examiner has already indicated that claims 4, 5, 7, 8, and 16-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

All of the pending claims following entry of the amendments, i.e., claims 1-25, are in condition for allowance and such favorable action is earnestly solicited.

If any outstanding issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

The Examiner's attention to this matter is appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

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